

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 OPR-02 /075 W

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8973

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

UNCLAS DUBLIN 0726

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, EI

SUBJECT: PROVOS CLASH WITH POLICE AT PORTLAOISE

1. WHAT HAD PROMISED TO BE A PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION AGAINST CONDITIONS IN PORTLAOISE PRISON TURNED INTO SERIOUS VIOLENCE APRIL 3. AN ESTIMATED 1,000 PEOPLE FROM BOTH THE REPUBLIC AND NORTHERN IRELAND JOINED A DEMONSTRATION SPONSORED BY THE PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN IN PORTLAOISE TO SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH 20 IRA PRISONERS ON HUMGER STRIKE IN THE PRISON. THE DEMONSTRATION AT THE BEGINNING WAS REASONABLY ORDERLY, BUT THE PROVO ORGANISERS APPARENTLY LOST CONTROL OF THE CROWD WHEN SOME STONE THROWING BEGAN. THE DEMONSTRATION QUICKLY DEVELOPED INTO A RUNNING BATTLE WITH THE POLICE WHICH RESULTED IN ABOUT 40 DEMONSTRATORS AND 8 POLICE HAVING TO RECEIVE HOSPITAL TREATMENT FOR INJURIES.

2. APPROXIMATELY 100 PROVISIONAL IRA PRISONERS STARTED A HUNGER STRIKE MARCH 7 IN PROTEST AGAINST ALLEGED BRUTALITY AND RESTRICTIONS AT PORTLAOISE PRISON. THE GOVERNMENT HAD PREVIOUSLY IMPOSED SPECIAL MEASURES AT THE PRISON FOR SECURITY REASONS. AFTER A WEEK ALL BUT 20 PRISONERS ENDED THEIR HUMGER STRIKE. THE PROVISIONAL IRA DEMONSTRATION WAS IN SUPPORT OF THE REMAINING STRIKERS, BUT WAS UNDOUBTEDLY ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PROVOS

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TO MANIFEST THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT POLICY VIS-A-VIS THE IRA.

3. WHILE THE VIOLENCE WAS SERIOUS, IT APPEARS THAT THE PROVO LEADERSHIP DID NOT INTEND TO HAVE AN OPEN CLASH WITH THE GOVERNMENT. ALSO, THE CLASHES APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN A SPONTANEOUS, UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT AND DO NOT APPEAR TO REPRESENT THE BEGINNING OF A

CONCERTED CAMPAIGN OF PROVO VIOLENCE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. A LEADER OF THE IRISH CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION STATED THAT THERE WILL BE ANOTHER MEETING AT PORTLAOISE IN TWO WEEKS TIME. WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION THAT THIS MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE. HOWEVER, WE IMAGINE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL TRY TO PREVENT ANOTHER MEETING SO SOON AFTER ONE THAT DEGENERATED INTO VIOLENCE. CURLEY

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 04-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
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